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*The Improvement of the Death of Faithful
Ministers.*

A
S. E R M O N

Preached *October 11, 1747.*

TO THE
CONGREGATION of PROTESTANT
DISSENTERS in *Silverstreet,*

On Occasion of the D E A T H of their
late worthy Pastor, the Reverend Mr.
THOMAS BURES.

By *WILLIAM LANGFORD, M. A.*

Published at the Request of the Congregation.

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The Improvement of the Drain of England
Municipal



A

SERMON

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Dissenters in Sheffield,

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Thomas Hurrell.

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WILLIAM LINDFORD, M.A.

Minister of the Gospel at Sheffield.

LONDON:

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Printed by James Dutton, at the
the Academy, and at the
MILNER'S.

T O T H E
CONGREGATION lately under the
Pastoral Care of the Reverend Mr. THO-
MAS BURES.

My dear Friends,

THE Lord of the Harvest hath called me to labour statedly in another Part of his Vineyard; but I am not unmindful of the Favours received from you while I ministred to you in holy Things; and I beg your Acceptance of the following Discourse as a small Testimony of my affectionate Gratitude and sincere Concern for your Welfare.—'Twas preached and published at your Request; and, notwithstanding the Imperfections you will observe in it, 'tis, I apprehend, seasonable, and calculated, in some measure, to assist you in the Improvement of the great Affliction with which God has been pleased to visit you. I was not willing to exceed the usual Limits of this Service, and therefore contracted the Application, and omitted the particular Advices that might have been offered to you on this mournful Occasion; but I hope you'll permit me to supply that Defect in the present Address, by a few Words of Exhortation.

I beseech you then (1), To give all Diligence to make sure your Interest in the everlasting Covenant of Grace; for this is all our Salvation, the glorious Charter of all our spiritual Privileges, and the only Foundation of true Peace and Comfort in Life and Death; this Covenant is well ordered in all Things, contains Promises equal to all our Wants, and is secured by the immutable Love,
Power,

Power, and Faithfulness of God in Jesus Christ the Mediator : As we are interested in the Blessings of this Covenant by Faith in him, so the Evidence of our Interest will bear proportion to the Degree and Activity of our Faith ; pray therefore to the Lord to increase your Faith, that you may be filled with all Joy and Peace in believing, and may abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost.

2. Go on in a stated and serious Practice of Closet Religion.

Daily Communion with God in secret will be your best Support under all the Troubles of Life, and your surest Guard against the numerous Temptations of it. Set a-part some Portion of your Time every Day for retired acts of Devotion, reading the Scriptures, Meditation, Prayer and Praise, and be careful to engage your Hearts to approach unto God in these Exercises. This will be a comfortable Evidence of your Sincerity, and an excellent Means of your Establishment and Growth in Grace ; to which nothing is more prejudicial than a Neglect, or Thoughtless Performance of the Duties of secret Religion.

(3.) Let Family-Religion be maintained in all its Branches. This consists in the daily Worship of God in our Houses, and in giving good Instructions, as well as good Examples to those that dwell with us, especially to our Children. Families are the least, but the most ancient Societies in the World, and the Fountains from whence Good or Evil flows into Churches and Nations ; the Neglect

Neglect of Family-religion has been a principal Cause of the general Corruption that prevails, in our times; let me therefore earnestly exhort you to this Duty, which will be very useful to preserve the Life and Comfort of Godliness in your own Souls, to promote the best Interests of those who are most near and dear to you, and for whom you are in a special Manner accountable, and a good Preparative both to yourselves and them for a profitable Attendance on public Institutions.

(4.) Let the Lord's Day be strictly observed: This is the Day of our Saviour's Resurrection from the dead, and the Day which his Apostles, under the Conduct of his good Spirit, set a-part as the weekly Season of Christian Assemblies for solemn Worship, and therefore we call it the *Christian Sabbath*. The Appointment of one Day in seven as a Day of public Worship, is so nearly connected with the Interest of Religion, that one can't see how this could subsist, much less how it could flourish without the Aid thereof. In order to answer the religious Purposes of the Lord's Day, we must not only attend public Prayers and Instructions, but devote the Remains of the Time (excepting what must be allowed for Works of Necessity and Mercy) to secret and Family Acts of Piety.—The Profanation of the Lord's Day, is one of the crying Iniquities of our Land, for which we have Reason to fear God's righteous Judgments. I hope Protestant Dissenters will imitate the good Practice of their godly Ancestors, and keep at the greatest Distance from this Sin.

(5). Let me excite you to the great Duties of Church-

Church-fellowship. Consider the Importance of the Relation in which you stand, by your own Consent, as Members of a Christian Society. Oh ! forsake not the assembling of yourselves together (as the manner of some is) but remember, that you are not only to worship together, as God gives you Opportunity ; 'tis also incumbent on you to watch over one another in the Lord ; to speak often one to another (as your Affairs will permit) on the great Matters of your Faith and Salvation, to reprove, exhort, pity and comfort, and, in a word, to love as Brethren. The Beauty and Prosperity of Churches cannot be preserved without a serious Discharge of these relative Duties.

My dear Friends, the Advices which I have given you are offered not to reprove, but rather to stir up your pure Minds by Way of Remembrance ; they carry their own Evidence with them, and I trust the Lord will make them acceptable, and in some Degree useful to you. I earnestly beg a Share in your Prayers for myself, and the Flock of Christ committed to my Charge, that I may obtain Mercy of the Lord to be faithful, and that his Blessing may rest upon them.

Now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

I am your Wellwisher, and

Servant for Christ's Sake,

William Langford.

2 COR. iv. 12.

So then Death worketh in us, but Life in you.

TIS grievous to me, as well as to you, to reflect on the sad Occasion of my appearing here this Day, which is to condole you on the Death of my very dear Brother, your late worthy Minister, and to direct you (through Grace) to the best Improvement of so awful a Visitation of Providence.

Were this good Man, and all your other faithful Ministers, who went before him to Glory, permitted to address you from this Pulpit, at this Time, what could they recommend to you more seasonable and important, than to consider their Death as Means and Motives to exercise and encrease your spiritual Life? That as Death has wrought in them, so spiritual Life may work in you; that you, by the Review of their successive Departures from you, may be quickened in the Race set before you, and that having finished your Course, you may happily meet them in the General Assembly and Church of the

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First-

First-born. This is the Thought which has impressed my Mind, and with which I shall endeavour to entertain and affect yours.

The Connection of my Text with the foregoing Passages of this Epistle, is easily seen. The Apostle having declared the Excellence and Efficacy of the Gospel-Ministry, and the Sincerity and Diligence with which he, and others his Fellow-labourers, had discharged their Office, in the 7th, and following Verses of this Chapter, he takes Notice of their bodily Infirmities and external Afflictions, with a Design to magnify the Grace and Power of God in the blessed Fruits of their Labours.---But we have this Treasure in earthen Vessels (mean and brittle) that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us; or, that the excellent Power, attending our Ministry in the Conversion and Edification of Souls, may the more evidently appear to be Divine, and not Human.

After this general Assertion, he describes their Sufferings and their Supports, setting the one over-against the other. *We are troubled on every Side, yet not distressed (not straitned and confined in our own Spirits); we are perplexed, but not in Despair; Persecuted (by Men), but not forsaken (of God); always bearing about in the Body the Dying of*

the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our Body, for we which live are alway delivered unto Death for Jesus sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh ; or, That the Resurrection and glorious Exaltation of Jesus Christ, might be demonstrated in the Support of our dying Bodies, and in the Effects of our Preaching and Services in this State of Mortality.*

In my Text, we have the Conclusion or Sum of the whole Matter ; *so then Death worketh in us, but Life in you ;* we die, but you live ; our temporal Affliction is your spiritual Advantage ; Death furrounds us continually, and we feel the Principles of Death working powerfully in our Bodies and wearing them away ; but, blessed be God, the Life of Christ worketh as powerfully in your Souls, as Death does in our Bodies, that spiritual and eternal Life, which you have received by means of our Preaching, and which is confirmed and strengthened in you, by means of our Sufferings and Mortality. *For (says he) all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace, might through the Thanksgiving of many, redound to the Glory of God †.*

* 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 10, 11.

† ver. 15.

From the Words thus explained, I shall take occasion to discourse on the following Observation, *viz.* The Death of faithful Ministers is, thro' Grace, an effectual Means of exciting the spiritual Life that is in real Christians; those especially who enjoy'd the Blessing of their Ministrations.

In speaking to this Observation,

I. I shall make some general Remarks on the Death of faithful Ministers.

II. Shew what Acts of spiritual Life in Christians are suitable to this awful Providence.

III. The Connection between the Affliction and the Improvement; or how the Death of faithful Ministers leads Christians to such Acts of spiritual Life. When we have finished these Doctrinal Articles, we shall conclude with a particular Application.

I. I am to make some general Remarks on the Death of faithful Ministers. 'Tis manifest, (1.) that the best of Men are not exempted from the Stroke of Death: I pretend not to tell you any new thing, when I say, that Ministers, in common with the rest of Mankind, are Mortals; nor need we wonder,

wonder, if the Lives of some of them are short; for their Work is very weighty, and the want of desired Success, after all their Studies and Applications, may sadden their Hearts, and put a Period to their Days sooner than we might apprehend from the common Course of Nature. God could have taught us the Way to Heaven by the Ministration of immortal Angels; and these glorious Spirits would have accounted it their Honour to have published the glad Tidings of the everlasting Gospel, into the sacred Contents whereof they look with never-ceasing Reverence and Pleasure; but Infinite Wisdom has seen fit, to employ, in this Service, Men of like Passions with ourselves. Angels have been extraordinary Messengers to the Church; but frail and dying Men her ordinary Ministers, by a divine Institution under the Old Testament and the New. The High Priest, the most sacred Minister under the Law, was taken from among Men, and ordained for Men in things pertaining to God, and he was not suffered to continue by reason of Death.-- The Fathers, where are they? and did the Prophets live for ever? No. *Moses, my Servant, is dead, says God**. And this must e're long be said of all his Minist'ring Servants, that are now engaged in his Work.--- The Consideration of our Mortality may be very

* Josh. ii. 2.

beneficial to us, and to those over whose Souls we are appointed to watch. 'Tis an Argument to excite our Diligence in Duty, that we may finish our Work in our Day before the Night cometh, in which no Man can work. 'Tis a Thought that should keep us from Pride, and teach us to look above ourselves, even to Jesus Christ, for Help and Success; and it should dispose us to sympathize with those that are under our Care, because we also are compassed with Infirmary †. On the other hand, our dear Friends, to whom we minister, may make some good Use of the manifold Imperfections that attend us in this mortal Flesh. If we are faithful, they may see in us so many Monuments of the pardoning Mercy, and converting Power of our great Lord and Redeemer; so many Patterns to encourage their Faith and Hope in him: And the Sense they have of our Weaknesses, should lead them to ascribe all the Good they receive by our Endeavours not to us, but to the Grace of God that is with us.

There are therefore wise and gracious Reasons for the Appointment of imperfect and dying Men to the Office of the Ministry.

† Heb. v. 2.

But

But I must observe, (2.) that the Death of faithful Ministers is a great Affliction to the Church of Christ, and to those above all others over whom they had the Inspection. For when they die, there is an excellent Treasure of Knowledge, and Grace carried away from Earth to Heaven; all that knew them have a Loss, but chiefly their Congregations, to whose spiritual Interests their Lives were devoted; great Reason have their Flocks to mourn, because they shall see their Faces, and hear their Voices no more; no more enjoy their public or private Instructions and Counsels; their Eyes shall no more behold their Teachers, nor their Ears admit the gracious Words that proceeded out of their Lips---they are fallen asleep, and shall not awake till the Heavens be no more.

Nevertheless I observe, (3.) that this Affliction is improveable to the spiritual Benefit of Christians. *For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them which are the called according to his Purpose *.* *For all things are yours (says this Apostle) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come †.* And as the various Talents and Capacities of their Ministers, while Life is continued, are useful to

* Rom. viii. 28.

† 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

them;

them; so they are taught to make a spiritual Improvement of their Death.

II. I proceed therefore to shew what Acts of spiritual Life in Christians are suitable and requisite on Occasion of the Decease of their pious Pastors. But before I come to this, I must observe, that the spiritual Life of Believers includes their Justification and Sanctification, they are pardoned and accepted as righteous in the Sight of God, through the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and this blessed Change of their State is called, *a Passing from Death unto Life* †. But that which I am to speak of is their Life of Sanctification. *They were dead in Sins and Trespases, even as others; but God, who is rich in Mercy, for the great Love wherewith he loved them, even when they were dead in Sins, bath quickened them together with Christ, and raised them up together, and made them sit together in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus* *. The Acts of this spiritual Life are various. I shall take notice of some of them, by which Christians should, and will endeavour to improve the Death of their faithful Ministers.

(1.) They should improve this afflictive Dispensation, by a serious practical Remem-

† John v. 24.

* Eph. ii. 5, 6.

brance of their sound Doctrine and good Examples. The Apostle urges this Duty, *Remember them which have the Rule over you* (or rather remember your Guides, or your deceased Pastors) *who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever* ||, q. d.

“ For as much as you can no longer enjoy
 “ their Presence, 'tis incumbent on you to
 “ recollect, in the most solemn Manner you
 “ can, the good Instructions they have given
 “ you, and the excellent Examples they have
 “ set before you, and the blessed Issue of their
 “ Faith and Patience, in the Kingdom of a
 “ living and unchangeable Redeemer.--- Oh!
 “ think how they prayed how they preached,
 “ how they lived and how they died, and
 “ what Happiness they are now in Possession
 “ of, that you may be Followers of them as
 “ they were of Christ, and may dwell for
 “ ever with them in the heavenly State.”

(2). The right Improvement of this Affliction includes a lively Exercise of Faith.

The Christian Life is a Life of Faith:
 And when should Faith be more lively than

|| Heb. xiii. 7, 8.

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under

under such a trying Providence as the Death of Ministers that have been able and useful? How zealous should Christians, in this Trial, be, to maintain the Purity of Gospel Doctrine and Ordinances among them? How entirely should they call off their Dependance from frail Instruments? And how confidently and humbly should they rest on the Faithfulness of God in Christ, to direct them, to supply their Wants, and to give them Pastors after his own Heart?—

(3). This Providence must be improved, by frequent and lively Addresses to the Throne of Grace.

As Christians should not forget to praise God for any Good they have received by the Services of their Ministers whom he hath taken away from them; so they should both in secret and publick pray to the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send Labourers into his Harvest, and fill up the Places of those who are gone from Labour, to everlasting Enjoyment*. If we know the Importance of the Blessing of a Gospel Ministry, we shall not think we can be too fervent in our Requests to God for it.

* Matth. ix. 37.

(4). A deep Repentance for Unfruitfulness under past Means of Grace, is very suitable and becoming on this Occasion.

I desire to be as far as any one from adding Affliction to the Afflicted, by rash Censures, or by imputing the Death of faithful Ministers to the Sins of their People; but, certainly, 'tis meet for every Christian, under such a Visitation, to commune with his own Heart, and to consider what Use he has made of his Gospel Privileges : And on such a Review who will not find Cause enough for Humiliation ? As to unconverted Sinners, they, without Controversy, should cast themselves down at the Foot of God, and pray that his good Spirit may not cease to strive with them. --- Lord (should they say, when their pious Teachers are silenced by Death) tho' we have rejected many awful Calls and Warnings, many melting Expostulations of the Ambassadors of Peace whom thou hast recalled, yet, for thy Name's Sake, leave us not to the Blindness and Corruption of our own Hearts, but make us a willing People in the Day of thy Power. Oh ! turn thou us and we shall be turned ; as we have neglected the Endeavours of thy Servants in their Lives, may their Death awaken us to Repentance ? And, doubtless,

less, sincere Christians may find sufficient Reason to humble themselves before God for their Neglects and Misimprovements, and to cry to their heavenly Father, when they are chastened of him, for Mercy to pardon, and for a plentiful Effusion of his Grace, to make their Souls more fruitful. But this Penitence must be accompanied,

(5). With deep and cordial Submission to the Will of God.

This is a Temper of Mind that becomes us in every State of Life. Should Things be according to our Mind? Shall we receive Good at the Hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive Evil? Has he not an absolute Propriety in us, and in all our Friends and Comforts, and may he not do what he will with his own? Lord, we adore and submit to thy Providence; for *we know that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in Faithfulness hast afflicted us* *.

(6.) Brotherly Love should be fervent and constant---Ministers fail; but Charity must not. On the contrary, when Death deprives us of the Advantage of their Labours, we

* Psal. cxix. 75.

should be the more careful to maintain a sincere and warm Affection among ourselves ; for in this Case we must look on one another as Brethren, not only in Faith and Religion, but in Adversity too, and therefore as bound in a peculiar Degree to pity and pray for one another, and to strive together with one Heart and Soul for the Preservation of our Gospel-Fellowship. *Be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you* *.

(7). Heavenly Thoughts and Affections should be excited.

Every pious Minister that is taken from the Church below, is a new Member added to the Church above ; and the more Friends we have in Heaven, with the greater Ardour should our Hearts ascend up after them. O my Soul, why dost thou still cleave to the Dust ? Why art thou so tied to this Life and World ? Look up to thy heavenly City, there is thy God and Father, there thy dear Redeemer, who hath loved thee, and washed thee from thy Sins in his own Blood, there are the Spirits of just Men made perfect ; and dost thou not desire, in Submission to God's

* 2 Cor. xlii. 11.

Will,

Will, and when thy Work shall be at an End, to depart from this sinful and unquiet World, to mingle with Angels and Saints, and be joined to all thy Christian Friends and Brethren, who through Faith and Patience do now inherit the Promises? Lord quicken thou me in thy Way!

By these Acts of spiritual Life, should Christians improve the Death of their faithful Ministers.

III. We go on to the Connection between the Affliction and the Improvement; or to shew how the Death of faithful Ministers conduceth to these Acts of spiritual Life in Christians.

The good Improvement of this, and all other Dispensations of God to us, must be originally ascribed to his Grace, and the promised Influences of his Spirit; but, as in all other, so in this Instance of the divine Conduct, the Means are suitable to the End.--- A few Reflections may suffice for the Proof of this Point.

(1) Some Christians may be made more sensible than ever they were of the great Blessing of a Gospel Ministry, by the Loss
of

of Men that have been useful in it. 'Tis an Instance, a too common Instance, of the amazing Ingratitude and Stupidity of human Nature, that Men know not the Value of their Mercies, so much by the Enjoyment, as by the want of them. 'Tis undeniably thus, in the Case of bodily Health and Strength, and the external Comforts of this Life; and I fear the Observation may too justly be applied in the Matter we are speaking of. Some Christians may set too little Value on the great Privilege they enjoy in the Care of able and pious Pastors, while they live; but when they are dead, they reflect on the Greatness of their past Mercy, grieve and mourn to think it has been no better improved, and so are excited to greater Watchfulness and Diligence, in attending Christ's Institutions.

(2.) The dying Experiences and Temper of some godly Ministers, have contributed not a little to the Confirmation and Exercise of spiritual Life in their surviving Friends. Thus the Apostles and Primitive Christians advanced the Interests of Christ, by their patient and triumphant Sufferings for his Name's sake. And there have been many good Men, and pious Ministers, in later Ages, who have on their Death-beds expressed such full Assurance

urance of their own Happiness, offered up such Prayers, and given such Warnings and Counsels, as have been singularly useful, both to the Conversion of Sinners and the Establishment of Saints. I don't say this is the happy Frame of all faithful Ministers in their last Moments ; some are suddenly called off the Stage, and others removed by stupifying Disorders, that leave little Room for the Exercise of their rational Faculties. The Sovereignty of God is to be adored and submitted to in all his Ways ; but 'tis surely a great Blessing to Christians to see in their dying Ministers evident Proofs of the divine Truth and Power of the Gospel which they preached.

(2). The Consideration of the Account which Ministers at Death are called to give, not only of themselves, but of all the Souls committed to their Charge, has a great Tendency to awaken the Graces of the Christian Temper.

“ My beloved Minister is dead, he is gone
 “ to make a Report of his Work to his Ma-
 “ ster ; and as I was one of his Flock, my
 “ Soul is included in his Account ; oh ! that
 “ I may make a Part of his Crown in the
 “ Day of the Lord Jesus ! Oh ! let me give
 “ all Diligence to make my Calling and E-
 “ lection

" lection sure, that the Lord's Messenger de-
 " parted this Life may not be a swift Witness
 " against me at his Judgment-Seat, but that
 " he may meet me with Joy, and present
 " me perfect in Christ * !"

(3). Christians are excited to a spiritual
 Improvement of the Death of their Mini-
 sters, by a Regard to the Honour of Christ,
 and the Prosperity of the Churches to which
 they have joined. " Hath the Lord re-
 " moved our faithful Guide from us ? Has
 " he smitten our Shepherd ? Oh ! let us take
 " Care that we be not divided or scattered by
 " Satan's Devices, and let us take Care that
 " we do not by our Deadness and Formality
 " provoke the Lord to with-hold his gracious
 " Conduct and Blessing from us in the Choice
 " of a Successor ! The more lively we are in
 " Faith, Love, and good Works, the better
 " Grounds shall we have to hope, through
 " Mercy, for a comfortable Supply of our
 " present Exigence ; but if we now disregard
 " the Voice of God's Word and Providence,
 " may we not fear that we shall be dispersed,
 " or given up to the Conduct of some cor-
 " rupt Teacher, who will endeavour to sub-
 " vert our Souls, and to overthrow the sacred
 " Foundations of our Faith and Holiness ?"

* Col. ii. 28.

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(4). And

(4). And *Lastly*, The Death of faithful Ministers may contribute to the Increase of spiritual Life in Christians, by making Way for Successors whose Gifts and Graces are more suitable, and through a divine Blessing, shall be more beneficial to them.—The most upright Servants of Christ in this World, may have Enemies as well as Friends, Enemies that long for their Death, and Friends that are too fond of the Continuance of their Lives; Enemies that would send them out of the World too soon, and Friends that would keep them in the World too long, and scarce ever think it Time to part with them. Now God is the Judge in this and all Affairs—He numbers the Days of his Ministers, sets them a Time, and appoints them their Work; and when this is finished, he calls them home to give Place to others, whom he has prepared for, and inclined to the Service of Souls, and whose Talents are peculiarly suited, and shall, through the Supply of his Spirit, be very great Blessings to his People. Jesus Christ not only gives Ministers, but takes them away for the Edification of the Church.

I shall now conclude with an Application agreeable to the present Solemnity.

My dear Friends, I need not say any thing more, to convince you of the Greatness of
your

your Loss. Your Countenances, your Garments, and this mournful Place testify your Sense of it: but I must beg leave to give some Account of the Life and Death of your late worthy Minister, for the Honour of Religion. And as I had the pleasure of uniting with him some Years in the Fellowship of the Gospel - Ministry, with uninterrupted Harmony and Friendship, I can't be thought a Stranger to his Character; and I shall say nothing concerning him, but what I know, or firmly believe to be true.

The Revd. Mr. *Thomas Bures* was born in this City, *October 30, 1698*. His Parents were pious; and his Grandfather *Bures* was an eminent Dissenting Minister in this Metropolis. --- I am informed, that our deceased Brother, in his early Years, discovered a deep and uncommon Sense of Religion; from his Childhood he was acquainted with the Scriptures, and took great Delight in secret Exercises of Piety. --- This led the Thoughts of his Parents to that sacred Function, to which, in due time, he devoted himself. --- He passed through his academical Learning with Reputation in this Neighbourhood, under the Conduct of two very able Instructors in Philosophy and Theology, Mr. *Eames* and Dr. *Ridgely*. --- Having fi-

nished his preparatory Studies, his first Settlement was in the honourable and religious Family of Sir *Richard Ellis*; he performed the Duty of his Station with great Diligence and Acceptance; but was soon called from it to assist an aged Minister in the Country. He undertook the Service with much Self-confidence and Humility; but, thro' the Grace of Christ, which was with him, his Labours were agreeable, and he was highly esteemed by the Minister and People.

When it pleased God to take from you of this Congregation one of your worthy Pastors, the Revd. Mr. *Roswell*, you called him to assist the surviving Minister, the pious and learned Mr. *Smith*; who, I am told, expressed a singular Affection and Respect to him as long as he lived. After his Decease, you, having sufficiently known our Brother's good Capacities and Dispositions, called him by solemn Ordination to stand in a pastoral Relation to this Church, in which he continued to the End of his Days. As to his religious Character in general, we may apply to him what we read; *He was a faithful Man, and feared God above many* *. He was cloathed with Humility, and had the

* Neh. vii. 2.

Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit ; and he was a Lover of all good Men, of all that appeared to love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity. --- In doctrinal Points, he was a moderate *Calvinist* ; he well understood the Doctrines of the Gospel professed by our worthy Reformers, often lamented the too common Defection from these sacred Truths, nor was he backward to defend them ; and his Zeal in the Defence thereof was so conducted by Prudence, and recommended by the Charity and Humility of his Mind and Manner of Address, that, while you that were in his own Sentiments were entertained and edified, none could readily be offended.

If there was a Defect of natural Vivacity in his Constitution, this was supplied by the Strength and Solidity of his Judgment, which was improved by unwearied Diligence, in Reading and Meditation. --- His Sermons were elaborate ; there was a rich Variety in his Subjects, and a wise Mixture of the Doctrines, Duties, and Privileges of Christianity : His Method was easy and natural ; his Style concise, but clear, adapted to the lowest Understanding ; yet raised above the Contempt of the polite and ingenious ; his Elocution was feeble, but sweet and melting. --- There were evident Marks of extensive
Know-

Knowledge and careful Study in his Compositions, and a devotional Spirit animated them all. He knew how to touch the Conscience of a profane and careless Sinner ; but was in a special Manner blessed with the Tongue of the Learned, to speak a Word in Season to him that was weary. --- He had the Gift as well as the Grace of Prayer, in a high Degree. Oh ! with what Reverence, Contrition, and Enlargement of Heart did he address to God with and for you !

I must add he wanted not Talents for agreeable and useful Conversation, tho' his excessive Modesty would hardly allow him to think so of himself, and the Unhappiness of natural Constitution depressed his Spirits, and led him to affect too much a recluse and solitary Life, by which Means he deprived his Friends of a great deal of Pleasure and Benefit, and cut himself off from some Parts of Usefulness, to which his Heart was well disposed ; but this Loss was in great measure compensated to you by his diligent Preparations for his public Work.

After he had complained many Years of bodily Infirmities, his last Illness attacked him with great Violence, and snatched him away from us, before we were generally apprehensive

hensive of his Danger. --- But I am glad I can inform you, by those who conversed with him in his last Moments, that his Mind was serene and calm. He expressed his Dependence on Christ's Righteousness for Acceptance, and a comfortable Persuasion of his own Sincerity. --- As Death drew near, he declared the solemn Thoughts of his Heart concerning Eternity, in very affecting Language. --- Oh! awful Eternity! And has God prepar'd an Eternity of Happiness for such poor lost, short-lived and perishing Creatures as we are! Oh! the Goodness of God in Christ! He exhorted all around him to think more of Eternity, and live more for Eternity. He died in the 49th Year of his Age; did not arrive at old Age, yet was gathered as a Shock of Corn in its Season. A long Day he had not; but he did his Work, and his Master kindly called him home before the Shadows of the Evening approached. May the Lord comfort the Relatives of the Deceased; may they remember his dying Counsels, and follow his good Example.

I heartily sympathize with you, my Friends, of this Congregation; I have represented the right Improvement of your Affliction in a general Way, and I earnestly exhort and beseech you to make the Application to yourselves.

selves. May the God of all Grace and Consolation support your Minds, sanctify his Chastisement, and, in answer to your fervent Prayers, send you an able and faithful Pastor, that this antient and much respected Church may not only abide, but revive and flourish. This will be Matter of Joy to many good Christians, and I beg Leave to assure you, will add not a little to the Pleasure of my Life.

To conclude, let us all consider our latter End, and beg of God to teach us to number our Days so as that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom. Let not the Young think it too soon to enter on this Work by a speedy Repentance and Application to the Mercy of God in Christ: For what is our Life? 'Tis a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away.—Let those that are in the Fullness of their Strength remember, that all Flesh is Grass, and the Goodliness thereof as the Flower of the Grass, and that the Grass withereth and the Flower fadeth.

What shall I say to the Aged and Infirm? As Death sensibly worketh in your Bodies, pray that a Life of Grace may work in your Souls, and that as the outward Man perisheth, the Inward may be renewed Day by Day.

We

We are all dying Creatures on the Borders of an eternal World ; God grant that whether we live, we may live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we may die unto the Lord ; that we may be sincere and stedfast Christians, may be faithful to the Death, and receive a Crown of Life through the rich Mercy of God, and the All-sufficient Righteousness of his dear Son, to whom be Glory for ever.
Amen.

F I N I S.

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